Geelong Gallery

media release

Embargoed until Friday 8 June, 7pm—
Andrew Browne winner of the $30,000 2018 Geelong contemporary art prize

On display at Geelong Gallery

9 June to 19 August 2018
Geelong Gallery
Free entry—Open daily 10am to 5pm

An evocative, narrative-rich, and skilfully executed painting by Melbourne artist **Andrew Browne** is the winner of the *2018 Geelong contemporary art prize*, Geelong Gallery's biennial acquisitive award for contemporary painting.

Browne's *The awakening* 2017 is an outstanding example of this established artist's practice, and brings together a number of his enduring interests including landscape, natural phenomena, light, and the anthropomorphic potential of the spaces we inhabit. This prize-winning work is the first by **Browne** to be acquired by Geelong Gallery.

In his artist statement for the painting, **Browne** states, 'The awakening suggests a scenario as if on some cusp between dreaming and jolting consciousness. Less an unfolding narrative, and more a loaded and theatrical collision of symbol.'

Browne continues 'Though each element is in itself quite the mundane everyday, we've all been memorably disorientated in the nocturnal landscape, been spooked by an unusual aspect of foliage or happenchance detritus … Or perhaps it's just an awakening from a bad dream!'

The announcement of the prize-winning work was made by **Justin Paton**, Head curator of International Art, Art Gallery of New South Wales, and co-judge of the prize, at the opening of the exhibition on Friday 8 June, 6.00–8.00pm. The judging panel for this year's prize also included **Rebecca Coates**, Director, Shepparton Art Museum, and **Lisa Sullivan**, Senior Curator, Geelong Gallery.

In reflecting on the winning painting, the judges commented: 'This was a work that drew us in immediately and kept drawing us back. The key to its power is the board at the centre with its staring black 'eyes', backlit by a haunting nocturnal glow. With its flicks, smudges and overruns of colour, the plywood board suggests a painted surface hidden to the viewer, sharpening our curiosity about what

Winner—
2018 Geelong contemporary art prize
Andrew Browne
The awakening 2017
oil on linen
Reproduced courtesy of the artist and Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne

Geelong Gallery

has been made – or is being made – on the other side. The object could be read in multiple ways: as a redundant protest placard tied against a tree, or an abstracted crucifix-like form with looming attendants on each side. Gothic and film-noir-esque, the painting's moodiness and ambiguity are absolutely of our times. This may be an image of the fate of painting, or a broader evocation of a world where troubling events transpire on the edge of our awareness.'

Geelong Gallery wishes to thank the Dimmick Charitable Trust and Mercedes-Benz Geelong for generously sponsoring this signature event, which assists with the development of the Gallery's collection while supporting Australian artists and contemporary painting practice in general.

Over 550 entries were received from around the country for consideration for this year's prize, with 36 works shortlisted for exhibition. The *2018 Geelong contemporary art prize* will be on display at Geelong Gallery until Sunday 19 August.

Artist background

Andrew Browne is a Melbourne based Australian artist, born 1960. He works primarily in painting, but also in photography and graphic mediums including drawing, photogravure, intaglio and lithography.

He has exhibited widely over the last three decades, in solo exhibitions and many group shows including: *Every Brilliant Eye: Australian Art of the 1990s* (2017) and *Negotiating this world: Contemporary Australian Art* (2012) at the National Gallery of Victoria; *Suddenly Slowly*, Centre for Contemporary Photography (2016); *Horizon* (survey exhibition), Gippsland Art Gallery (2012); *Wilderness*: *Balnaves Contemporary Painting* (2010), Art Gallery of New South Wales; *Nocturne: Images of Night and Darkness* (2002), Geelong Gallery.

He has been shortlisted for a number of prize exhibitions including: *Arthur Guy Memorial Painting Prize* (2017) Bendigo Art Gallery; *Wynne Prize* (2011, 2002, 2001), Art Gallery of New South Wales, *Fleurieu Art Prize* (2016), Samstag Museum; and was recently awarded the *2016 Adelaide Perry Prize for Drawing*, judged by curator Julie Ewington.

His works are represented in significant Australia-wide university and corporate collections as well as many public and institutional collections, including the National Gallery of Australia, National Gallery of Victoria, Museum of Contemporary Art Sydney, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Monash Gallery of Art, TarraWarra Museum of Art, Bendigo Art Gallery, Gippsland Art Gallery, the Parliament House Collection, Canberra, and a number of regional public galleries through-out Australia.

Andrew Browne is represented by Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne

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